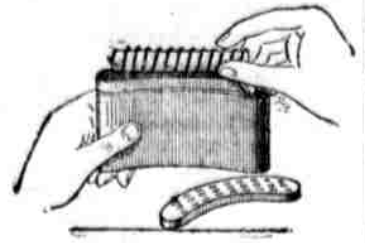


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Will Do It

## Lord Loveland Discovers America

By C. N. AND A. M. WILLIAMSON

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(Continued from Last Saturday.)

"You were a real hero," said Isadora. "Oh, o-oh!" And she breathed little cooling sighs of pity at sight of the hero's burns. "I could cry over your poor hand. It's a shame!" "Please don't!" exclaimed Loveland, laughing. "I can't stand any more tears!"

"Did you mind when I cried?" asked Isadora.

"Awfully!" said Loveland. As he spoke he smiled down at her in a friendly way, and the kindness in the blue, black lashed eyes made the girl's heart flutter like an imprisoned bird. She had been in love with him since the first day a little, then more and more. Now her love overflowed. It was too much for her emotional nature. She could not keep it back. And why should she try to keep it back, she asked herself, since her love must be considered an honor by this unsuccessful foreign adventurer?

"I'm glad," she almost sobbed. "Oh, you're worth more to me than anything in the world. I won't cry again if you ask me not. I'll do whatever you want me to. Pa'd most kill me if he knew I was talking like this. But I don't care—I don't care for anybody but you—no one else. Oh, suppose I'd let you make me marry Leo Cohen before I'd met you!"

Loveland was dumfounded. "My dear girl," he exclaimed, "you don't know what you are saying! You—" "I do know," Isadora broke in. "I know you are poor and in a lot of trouble, and you might have gone to prison. But you're a gentleman, all right. You're you, and that's enough. If you care about me the same as I do about you, why, all the rest!"

"But I—I mean—I'm sure you don't really care," stammered Val, checking himself on the verge of saying something rude.

"I do care. You needn't be afraid," she assured him. "I wouldn't have said a word. I'd waited for you to speak if things had been different, but I saw how you felt by the way your eyes looked a minute ago, and I wouldn't stop for manners, because, I say to myself, he's too much of a gentleman to tell a girl he loves her when he's got nothing and she everything."

"I hope I am too much of a gentleman to"—Val began desperately, but she cut him short with one little plump, patchouli-scented hand over his mouth.

"I know it. That's what I said. You don't need to tell me," she hurried on. "We'll have to run away and get married. Then pa'll forgive me. I'm all his got. He couldn't bear me to want for anything. But it's no use asking him first. He—"

"Dear girl, I have no idea of asking him!"

"No, of course. You ain't so silly. His heart's set on my taking Leo, but I wouldn't touch him with a ten foot pole now. My hero, I'll marry you to-morrow!"

"The devil you will!" said Alexander.

"They stood together at the door, he and Leo Cohen, who had persuaded the old man at last on one excuse or another to invite him upstairs."

The girl struggled up from her knees, and as Loveland bounded out of the big chair she caught his arm, nestling against him.

"You villain! Stealin' my gal's love behind my back and enticin' her to run off with you!" stammered Alexander, purple with fury.

"I didn't!" began Val indignantly. "What! You didn't? You want me to believe my gal asked you to marry her?"

Loveland started as if Alexander had struck him and flushed to the forehead. Involuntarily he glanced at Isadora, who looked up at him beseechingly. "Spare me!" the almond eyes implored.

"No. I don't want you to believe that," he said. And how hugely he would have laughed had he been told a few weeks ago that he would let himself be misunderstood and shamed for the sake of a girl like Isadora! But now he did not feel it strange that he should make this sacrifice for her. And, curiously enough, it seemed to be Lesley Deamer's voice, Lesley Deamer's eyes, which, haunting him always, bade him spare this common little woman at any cost.

"You are a sneak!" said Alexander. "Ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

"No," answered Loveland. "Shows what you are, den. You're a thief. You try to steal my daughter

because you 'tink you got her money!" "Oh, pa, he loves me! It's me he wants!" wailed Isadora, weeping, yet not daring to defend her lover at the expense of womanly self respect.

"You're a little fool, Isid, or you wouldn't believe any such a 'ting," Alexander scolded her, somewhat softened by her tears. "A feller like dat—a fraud, a liar!"

"If you're a younger man you wouldn't dare to say that," Loveland cut him short. "It's you who are lying!"

"What! You call me a liar? You—you cheat, you convict!" sputtered Alexander. "Take dat for your impudence!" And, rushing at Loveland like an angry bull, he struck him with both podgy fists.

Isadora screamed and seized her father's arms, crying out that he was wicked, cruel, ungrateful to the man who had saved his house from burning.

"Don't be afraid—I'm not going to strike back!" Loveland reassured her. "He knows that."

"Yes, he knows dat because he knows youse a coward," Alexander sneered, wheezing asthmatically. "You just git!"

"That's exactly what I'm anxious to do," said Loveland. "Goodby, Miss Alexander."

"Oh, you ain't leaving me forever!" cried the girl. "Pa, don't send him away like this. He—he ain't to blame." She hesitated, stammering. Then a wild longing to keep her lover at all hazards overcame fear and scruples. "It was me who—"

"Don't," said Loveland. "You can do no good. I shan't forget your kindness. We won't see each other again, but you must forget tonight and marry some man who can make you happy. Goodby once more." And, pushing past Cohen, who hovered near the door, he sent the commercial traveler sprawling as he walked out of the room.

Black Dick, who had been told to guard the broken window of the restaurant in the master's absence, had heard all or most of the disturbance from the foot of the stairs, and he ran after Loveland to suggest the wisdom of getting money from Alexander.

"He am a mighty wicked ole man," whispered the negro. "You done a lot for him, an' now he kick you out of de house widout wages."

"I shall never get a penny from the old beast. It's useless to try," said Loveland heavily, seeing a vision of homeward bound ships sailing away without him on board. "Goodby, Dick. I wish I had something to give you to remember me by, but I haven't."

"Lawd, why I'm a rich man wid money in de bank," protested Dick. "Do you 'tink because I got a black face I take suffin' off'n you? No; on de odder hand, I lend you what you like, an' you pay me back when you like. You've tret me like a gem-man."

Loveland thanked him, curiously touched, and as he refused the loan he found himself, somewhat to his own surprise, shaking hands warmly with the colored cook.

Bill Willing sat reading in the cold corner of the writing room in the Bat hotel. Somehow when he had not denuded himself of his last nickel and could afford to pay for a corner anywhere it was always the coldest corner, because he blithely sacrificed his chances of the warmer ones to others. "Say, just look at this, my boy!" he exclaimed, his eye sparkling with excitement, as he pointed to a paragraph which he had marked with red ink from a bottle on the table.

"Wanted" was the attractive word which headed the paragraph, and that was what Val had expected, but as he read he grew puzzled. "Wanted—For repertory work, juvenile leading man; must be tall; good looking; not over thirty; gentlemanly manners and appearance; slim figure; fashionable wardrobe on and off stage; no boozers or loafers need apply. Write at once, enclosing photo and stating experience, age, weight and lowest salary, to Jack Jacobus, managing star tour for Lillie de Lisle, the Little Human Flower, Modunk, O."

"Great Scott, ain't it the grandest ever?" Bill demanded, with a beaming smile. "My little gal, Lillie de Lisle! It's her; it's her! There can't be two Lillie de Lisles. Praise be, I've heard of her again! And she's way up top. She's a star!"

"Oh, the girl you used to be in love with at the theater?" asked Loveland. "Used to be? Was, am and will be till I end my days. Gee, every week whenever there was a spare dime I'd always bought this paper to see if I could run across her name and know where she was or what she's doin'."

And here she is a star on a tour of her own, doin' business as a 'little human flower.' Great, ain't it?"

"Why don't you write and say you'd like to have this engagement?"

"Me? Oh, Jiminy, am I a good-looking—am I under thirty, with a fashionable wardrobe on and off? Huh, mine's mostly off!" Bill laughed and then sighed. "The good Lord didn't make me for no juvenile lead."

"But if she still likes you, she'd stretch a point in your favor," Loveland suggested.

"Jacobus wouldn't. He was the property man I told you about that got me the sack on account of Lillie."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Val. "I say, you don't suppose he's married her since?"

"Can't have, at least not unless his wife's gone off the books," said Bill. "I heard of him not a year ago from one of the boys who used to supe with me. Said Jacobus had married an actress named Thora Moon, a big dark woman in the heavy blue. By Jinks,

I wish they was advertising for a scene painter instead of juvenile lead. Wouldn't I just whiz out to Modunk like a shot! Say, Gordon, you wouldn't like the job, would you? Great idea! Why, you're made for it. And you could give the little human flower old Bill's never-failin' love."

"I couldn't get them to take me, I'm afraid," said Loveland. "I'm not an actor."

"Pooh!" said Bill. "Ain't you ever played as an amateur?"

"Yes, once or twice. They roped me in," said Loveland, recalling a brilliant scene in the country house of a duchess.

"Well, then, there you are with your experience. And as for the wardrobe—my goodness, lad, what do you want more than those swell tweeds of yours and the dress suit you've got? Maybe you'll do better at Alexander's now you're a kind of star yourself!"

"A fallen star," laughed Loveland. "Look at me and see the marks I got ailing down the sky."

Then for the first time Bill noticed that his friend's hair was singed and his face reddened on one side, his white shirt covered with black spots and his left hand partly in, partly out of, a clumsily made bandage.

"Moses, but you have been through the wars!" exclaimed Bill. And he listened with growing excitement to Loveland's version of the fire.

"He chuckled me," said Loveland. "Je-rusalem! Why, in the name of all that's decent?"

"It was in the name of everything indecent—villain, cheat, liar, coward!"—that he did it. According to him, I was all those and ought to be in prison. He thought I'd been making love to his daughter."

"Gee! And had you?"

"No. It was a misunderstanding. But I couldn't explain. And the long and short of it is that I crawled in the dust for a few wretched dollars, which it seems I've got to lose after all. I don't know how I'm to touch any more unless I do as you say and get this place with your friend, 'the human flower.'"

"You'll go?" asked Bill, brightening.

"Rather, if they'll have me. But I haven't even a photograph!"

"Come out with me," said Bill, seizing him by his sound arm. "I know a place where they do you a tintype by flashlight for 10 cents and finish while you wait. I'll stand the racket. You can turn your good side to the machine. By the time the answer comes your hair'll have grown out and you'll be lookin' AL Hurrah! Three cheers for Lillie de Lisle, the little human flower, and her new juvenile lead!"

### CHAPTER XVIII.

#### SHOW FOLKS.

"M-O-DUNK!" shouted a brakeman, slamming the door of the day coach in which Loveland had traveled since some vaguely-remembered hour in the night when he had changed trains.

He had dozed, sitting on the hard red seat, his head leaning wearily against the window frame, and he started up at the yell which for an instant seemed part of his dream.

But, then, everything lately had been a dream—his weird experiences in New York, the absence of replies from his mother and the London bank in answer to his cable appeals, the coming of the telegram from Jack Jacobus, accepting the very modest terms named at Bill's suggestion; his start from the magnificent Grand Central station in New York, where the new "juvenile lead" had found his ticket awaiting him. And now, as he bundled half dazed out of the local train he had boarded some hours ago, the dream suddenly grew more bewildering than that ever.

What a contrast was this little country "depot" with the splendors of the Grand Central in New York!

Through an open door of the passengers' waiting room Loveland caught a glimpse of a squat stove rising like a fat bodied gray dwarf from a big box of sawdust, and a man who had been warming his hands came out of the room as the train stopped. He was fifty, perhaps, and tall, with a swagging walk, which caused the shabby fur lined coat he wore to swing like the skirt of a woman's dress as he moved forward. He had on patent leather boots, cracked with old age and caked with new mud.

Every line of the face and figure, every article of clothing, bespoke the fifth rate, seedy actor who has parted in his time with most things except his self conceit.

The idlers on the bench stared at him, then at the newcomer, and regarded with lazy curiosity the meeting between the two, for this gentleman in the tall silk hat and fur overcoat was Mr. Jack Jacobus, come to claim Mr. P. Gordon, the new member of his company.

"One quick glance and the glass gray eyes had taken in each detail of Loveland's appearance from the smartly made traveling cap, which still kept its shape, down to the neat brown boots. He approved all, it was evident, except the battered gladstone bag which Bill Willing had bought extraordinarily cheap at a pawnbroker's sale as a gift for his friend Gordon. This Loveland carried in his hand, and he saw the actor-manager's gaze rest sardonically upon it. Mr. Jacobus inquired if he had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Percival Gordon. Then when answered in the affirmative he delivered himself of a few polite words of greeting.

"Glad you got here all right. Don't know what we should have done if you hadn't turned up. Our juvenile lead came down with typhoid at our last week's signal and we've been tak-

ing our best ever since. Got the checks handy for your big baggage?"

Loveland had to explain that he had no big baggage and under the changing, freezing eyes of Jacobus felt as insignificant as a crushed worm.

"What, no wardrobe?" demanded the manager. His tone of friendly condescension to a new member of his company altered to one of bullying suspicion.

"My wardrobe is here," said Loveland, holding out Bill's present.

"Sorry I forgot to bring a magnifying glass," sneered Jacobus. "But, see here, I call this false pretenses. How are you going to play a new part every night of the week, some of 'em costum' ones, all out of a grip no bigger than your pocket? You ought to have told me what you didn't have—if it wouldn't have taken you too long."

Loveland wished that he had no heavier burden to carry than his bag, but he kept the thought to himself and struggled off with the arbitrariness of the trouper. The loungers, too far away to overhear the conversation, guessed that it was not altogether of a friendly nature and transferred their quids of tobacco to their cheeks in order to discuss the situation with a new if fleeting animation. As he passed them to descend the platform steps to the muddy country road Loveland caught the words "show folks."

"Show folks!" Yes, he was one of the show folks.

Loveland picked all over as if with a million stabs of tiny pins, but Jacobus only laughed and said that it was a good advertisement.

He questioned Loveland sharply concerning his theatrical experience, seeming to incline toward distrust since the incident of the traveling bag. Very soon he found out, in all its nakedness, the truth which had been veiled in the letter dictated by Bill—that Mr. Percival Gordon's experience had all been as an amateur and not very extensive at that. However, as Bill had prophesied, he did not appear to think it mattered much, though he sniffed and "hum'd" a little by way of curbing the new man's self esteem. "You've got a good stage presence and voice," said he, "though I don't know what the folks here will think of that English accent of yours. Pity you can't talk United States."

"You ought to have told me I had to play a new part every night," said Loveland. And the young man and the middle aged one, looking each other straight in the eyes, conceived for one another an intense dislike. "I was given to understand by a person of experience that I should have enough to get on with until I could buy something if necessary."

"Well, that depends on how soon you lay," returned Jacobus less bitterly. "You know very well that you'd have me on the leg once you got out here at this here little place with your ticket paid. Our show ain't made of money, especially the past two weeks. Heavens! What a frost! We've been living on our gleanings from last month, when we were going like smoke, and counting on the new juvenile lead to help work up better business. That's why I'm so sore at your cheek, Mr. Gordon, shooting yourself out west with what you stand up in. But as you are here we must make the best of a bad business. The girls may like you even with whiskers on your shirt cuffs, and I suppose among us we'll rig you up somehow out of our theater trunks. That's what you were laying for, eh?"

"Look here! If you're going to insult me much more I shall turn round and go back if I have to walk," said Loveland, cold, hungry, tired and miserable, but with just spirit enough left in him to be furious.

Jacobus saw that he had gone too far if the juvenile lead were not to slip through his fingers. He did not want that to happen, though he already had an uneasy jealousy of P. Gordon.

"Pshaw!" he exclaimed, laughing. "Don't you know a joke from an insult in your part of the country? It give me a start to see you land without a wardrobe, and I have a right to be mad. But I've just said we'd make the best of it and help you out all we can. What can we do more?"

The actor-manager watched his new acquisition furtively and at last interrupted himself in describing with some acerbity the absent members of the company to remark suddenly, "You look like a soldier."

"I am a soldier," Loveland replied before he stopped to think.

"Oh!" said Jacobus, regarding him keenly. "English army, of course?"

"Yes," answered Val shortly, regretting his frankness.

"I'm! What were you—sergeant?"

Loveland could have broken out into savage laughter. He, a lieutenant in the Grenadier guards, asked by this seedy theatrical man if it were a sergeant?

"No, I wasn't a sergeant," he replied. "I'm! See here, I hope you didn't leave the army—on short notice, eh? You know what I mean."

"Do you mean am I a deserter? Well, set your mind at rest," said Loveland, swallowing his wrath. "I'm not a deserter, and I shan't bring disgrace upon my company."

(Continued Next Saturday)

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